



Her Excellency Mrs Ma. Hellen Barber De La Vega
Ambassador of the Philippines
Embassy of the Philippines
1 Moonah Place,
Yarralumla, ACT 2600
cbrpe@philembassy.org.au

Senator the Hon Marise Payne
Minister for Foreign Affairs
PO Box 6100
Senate
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600
foreign.minister@dfat.gov.au

15 June 2020

Your Excellency,

Re: seeking to meet with you

The Media, Entertainment & Arts Alliance (MEAA) is the trade union and professional association for Australia's journalists.

For many years, MEAA has been closely engaged with our journalist colleagues in the Philippines. Through our affiliation with the International Federation of Journalists Asia-Pacific, MEAA has worked with members of the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) with safety training, union leadership training and capacity building, and workshops to promote excellence in journalism.

MEAA was closely involved in assisting the NUJP in the aftermath of the Ampatuan Massacre; meeting key members of the Philippines' government and civil society (including President Duterte's spokesman Harry Roque who was the legal counsel for the victims' families).

MEAA members also, for many years, contributed a portion of their salaries to financially support the children of slain journalists through an education fund – this included children of the 32 journalists slain in the massacre.

We write to seek the opportunity to meet with you to discuss the issue of press freedom in the Philippines.

Because of MEAA's longstanding and close contact with our colleagues in the Philippines, we are concerned at the guilty verdict in the cyber libel case against the editor and staff of the Rappler news web site based on a law that did not exist at the time of publication of the relevant news story. Also, as we said in our previous letter to you on May 7 this year, we are concerned at the closure of ABS-CBN and the loss of 11,000 media jobs. And we remain concerned at the dangerous working environment for journalists including the spate of "red-tagging" incidents and impunity for the killers of journalists.

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We sincerely hope that you would be available to meet with me to discuss these issues.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. Strom', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Marcus Strom
Federal President
MEAA Media section

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'P. Murphy', with a large, stylized 'M' and a long horizontal stroke.

Paul Murphy
Chief Executive
MEAA